

NEDA Inputs for the Philippine Statement
Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the CSD17,
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1. Discussions in the thematic area of agriculture are of particular interest to the Philippines given the agriculture sector's share in the economic sector, and more importantly, the number of people engaged in and dependent on the sector. Philippine agricultural development is an important consideration in improving overall rural welfare, essential to the poverty reduction strategy of the Country.
2. The Philippines has adopted agribusiness development as one of the strategies to reduce rural poverty. Agribusiness development is an approach that will address agricultural production constraints as well as post-production handling, value-adding and distribution concerns. Adequate and timely interventions to address these factors would then lead to job creation and income stability in the countryside.
3. Long-term food security remains an important goal for the country regardless of the crisis issue. Thus, productivity growths will be essential in achieving efficiency and equity objectives and would thus require sustained support. These would have to be in the context of maintaining competitive markets and investment in productivity-enhancing measures.
4. Policy options should recognize and consider (i) farm-market linkages that affect the flow of goods and services, as it largely influence prices of agricultural commodities/food items at the consumer level; as well as (ii) greater access of farmers to credit facilities which are not restricted only to limited goods, but considers multiple options for flexibility on where and how to invest resources.

Global Food Crisis

5. Vulnerability to high food prices and food insecurity is not limited to the rural population. As in the case of the Philippines, those in the urban areas were equally affected by the steep rise of food/rice prices, especially during the 2008 food crisis.
6. The inability of domestic agricultural systems to supply the consumption needs of the populace, particularly urban populations, its primary target market, triggers an internal imbalance in food supply. With urban areas highly dependent on imports and the rural sector for food, changes in the supply and its subsequent effect on prices makes its population equally vulnerable to price variability.

7. Sustainable upland agriculture should be supported to buttress lowland food production while ensuring integrity of the upland ecosystem for its ecological, economic and social values.

Capacity building, Financial and Technology Supports

8. A food security assessment is suggested to be conducted to identify underlying causes of food insecurity across countries. A similar activity has been proposed by the ASEAN-UN Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security which can be replicated by the UN system with other regional cooperation bodies.
9. A sustainable green revolution may be supported, but should encompass not only sustainable agricultural practices but also strengthen key inter and intra country institutions that manage the sector. Key to this are international and regional information and knowledge management systems that support agriculture development in general, and market information, early warning systems, technology transfer and skills development in particular.
10. Reinvesting in agriculture, the main theme of the 2008 World Development Report, should earnestly be considered.

Biofuels

11. Given that biofuel crops could compete for land with food crops and even lead to increased deforestation, current biofuels and land use policies and other related programs and projects being implemented should be reviewed to avoid conflicts that could affect food supply and natural forest cover.

Climate Change Challenges

12. Adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce/minimize impacts to the agriculture sector/food security should be with reference to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Work on climate change should be anchored on the agreements of the Convention. As a country Party to the UNFCCC and signatory to the Kyoto Protocol (Non-Annex 1 Party), the Philippines intends to remain an engaged stakeholder toward combating and adapting to climate change, with a particular emphasis on alleviating poverty and advancing sustainable development.
13. Climate change adaptation and mitigation programs and initiatives and should be part of the core development efforts, specifically the identification of appropriate policies together with sound planning and timely actions. The integration of climate risk management in agriculture and food security planning is a necessity given the critical dependence of agriculture and food production on climatic patterns

14. Mutual cooperation should be fostered by the government with development partners to overcome the emerging climate change impacts. New and additional resources for climate change should be identified.
15. As an initiative to narrow the resource gap for climate investments, public-private partnership for projects that have climate benefits should be strengthened. Governments should make their regulatory frameworks more conducive to leverage donor and private investments for innovative and climate-resilience projects. With the increasing attention on climate-proofing economies towards improving resiliency against climate-related disruptions and shocks, incentives to adapt climate must be in place to sustain interest of funding institutions and private sector to participate. Income and employment opportunities emanating from climate-friendly technologies and innovations (e.g., alternative energy generation, innovative engineering and construction, food production, etc) should be promoted.